

ML Strategies Health Care Preview

Week of May 21st

This week, various health care programs in need of reauthorization will be reviewed by the relevant House and Senate Committees. The Senate will be looking at the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, or PAHPA, and the House will begin its work on the Children's Hospital GME Program. The HELP and Finance Committees will also explore rural health care issues. Both the House and Senate have cleared a sizable portion of opioid-related legislation in the previous two weeks, and appear on pace to take another step forward during the June work period.

While the Farm Bill has stalled in the House, it's worth pointing out that the legislation would have created Agricultural Association Health Plans consistent with the Administration's proposed rule working its way through the Department of Labor. The AHP rule is expected to be [finalized](#) later this summer.

Notably, the House will vote on the Senate-passed Right to Try legislation this week, which has the support of FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb. Despite concerns raised by key players, the bill appears on track to pass.

DRUG PRICING

In case there was doubt after the initial rollout, the Administration needs to be taken seriously on its drug pricing push. CMS took steps last week to [highlight](#) prescription drugs that had increases in annual spending from 2012 to 2016 over five percent. The FDA also released a [list](#) of companies believed to be delaying the introduction of generic drugs. Commissioner Gottlieb [said](#) "no patients should be priced out of medicines they need to support their health."

Also last week, CMS released a [statement](#) on "Unacceptable Pharmacy Gag Clauses," urging plans to cease the practice of gag clauses in contracts. It was also [reported](#) last week that CMS is working on another Medicare Part D rule, which may include certain Administration proposals on drug pricing. The proposed rule, "[Policy and Technical Changes to the Medicare Advantage and the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Programs for Contract Year 2020](#)," is considered economically significant. The rule is expected out in September.

Lastly, the Administration published its [Request for Information](#) in helping to shape future policy development in the drug pricing space. Comments will be accepted until July 16, 2018.

As Congress grinds to halt this summer, remember the Administration has a number of moving pieces in this space that stakeholders should stay aware of as they consider the implications of the various proposals.



THIS WEEK IN THE HOUSE

On Wednesday (5/23), the House E&C Health Subcommittee will [hold](#) a hearing titled, "Reauthorization of the Children's Hospital Graduate Medical Education (GME) Program."

THIS WEEK IN THE SENATE

On Tuesday (5/22), the Senate HELP Committee will [hold](#) a hearing titled, "The Health Care Workforce: Addressing Shortages and Improving Care."

On Wednesday (5/23), the Senate HELP Committee will [hold](#) an executive session on S. 2852, Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness and Advancing Innovation Act of 2018.

On Wednesday (5/23), the Senate Aging Committee will [hold](#) a hearing titled "Preventing and Treating Opioid Misuse Among Older Americans."

On Thursday (5/24), the Senate Finance Committee will [hold](#) a hearing titled, "Rural Health Care in America: Challenges and Opportunities."

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